GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 720
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 24.07.2026

WATER CONSUMPTION AND GROUNDWATER DEPLETION BY AI-DRIVEN DATA CENTRES

720. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centres are depleting groundwater in water-stressed cities like Bengaluru while farmers and citizens struggle for water;
(b) the estimated water consumption by data centres in 2025-26 and projected demand by 2030;
(c) whether any national policy exists to restrict such centres in drought-prone areas and mandate recycled water use;
(d) the details of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) done for these projects; and
(e) the steps taken to prevent corporate water grab and ensure priority for common citizens over big tech companies?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (e): Data Centre industry in India has been growing at a steady pace. The rapid growth of AI and high-performance computing is driving increasing demand for data centre capacity in the country.

Data centres are located across the country such as Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Noida and Jamnagar. The installed capacity has grown from 375 MW in 2020 to current capacity of about 1575 MW.

India AI Mission supports India's AI ambitions under seven pillars including development of AI models, applications, datasets, talent development and affordable compute.

The mission does not establish data centres. However, for meeting demand of Artificial Intelligence workloads, 38,231 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) have been onboarded from 15 empanelled service providers/data centres under the AI compute capacity framework.

At the same time, the Government is cognisant of the importance of sustainable data centre ecosystem. The data centre requirements, including electricity, water and other infrastructure, are considered as part of broader planning and consultations with relevant stakeholders.

<u>Water consumption & extraction guidelines</u>

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has notified Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC 2017) and Energy Conservation & Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC 2024) prescribing energy efficiency and water conservation norms for buildings, including provisions relevant to data centres.
Groundwater extraction is regulated under the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti vide notification no. S.O. 3289(E) dated 24.09.2020 & amendment notification dated 29.03.2023.

The data centres are seeing continuous innovation in the way they are developed and operated. The industry is increasingly adopting advanced cooling technologies such as direct-to-chip liquid cooling, adiabatic cooling and immersion cooling.
With the evolution of AI infrastructure, cooling technologies are also moving towards closed-loop liquid cooling systems. This has significantly reduced water consumption, improve energy efficiency and enable higher-density AI computing.

Industry is also deploying high density racks to efficiently support high-performance computing & AI workloads for further reduction of power and water consumption.

Together, these technologies are significantly improving water use efficiency (WUE) by lowering the water requirement across data centre operations.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandated by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) under the Environment Protection Act 1986.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is managed through the PARIVESH portal *(Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub),* operated & managed by MoEF&CC.

This portal acts as the official, unified digital platform for submitting, tracking, and monitoring Environmental Clearances (EC) and related approvals.

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